



# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## IDNR to Host Longstanding Events Celebrating Lincoln's Birthday

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) will host longstanding programs with two national Veterans organizations at the Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site in Springfield on Lincoln's Birthday, February 12, 2021.

The American Legion Springfield Post 32 will honor its tradition of hosting the 87th Annual National American Legion Pilgrimage to the final resting place of Abraham Lincoln, his wife and three of their four sons. Post 32 is the originator of this tradition, which has been an American Legion major activity since 1935. The Wreath Placing Ceremony will be held inside the Lincoln Tomb at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, February 12. Participants will follow all public health and safety guidelines outlined by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

The VFW Department of Illinois will gather at 12:00 noon on February 12 outside at the Lincoln Tomb to honor the winners of the annual Voice of Democracy audio-essay program, which provides high school students with the unique opportunity to express themselves in presenting democratic and patriotic-themed recorded essays. Each year, nearly 40,000 students in grades 9-12 from across the country enter to win their share of \$2.1 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the program. The VFW annually commits \$3 million in scholarships and incentives at the Post, District, State and National levels for the program, which dates back to 1947.

As with most public activities being held at this time, the American Legion Pilgrimage and VFW Voice of Democracy Ceremony will modify their events this year. The Lincoln Tomb and all State Historic Sites in Springfield resumed operations on January 26, 2021 under Restore Illinois Phase 4 guidelines regarding social distancing, use of face coverings and capacity limits, and with extensive cleaning and disinfecting practices in place at each site.

Reservations and use of face coverings are required for visitors at the Lincoln Tomb and can be made through the EventBrite website, the IDNR website at [historicspringfield.dnr.illinois.gov](http://historicspringfield.dnr.illinois.gov) or by phone at 217-785-9363, TTY 217-782-9175. There is no charge for guided tours; donations

to support the historic sites are appreciated. Sign Language interpretation and other accommodations are available and can be scheduled ahead of time by calling the site. Guests are encouraged to review site history, hospitality and health information on the website prior to planning a visit.

### **About State Historic Sites at Springfield**

The IDNR State Historic Sites team of public servants in Springfield preserves six nationally significant museums and monuments, allowing staff to share the sites' dynamic history with visitors from throughout the United States and around the world. Through the values of history, hospitality and health, we aim to ignite an appreciation for the people and places in Illinois that shaped the meaning of freedom and the character of our country. State Historic Sites are part of the IDNR Office of Land Management, which also oversees State Parks, State Recreation Areas, State Fish and Wildlife Areas, and State Habitat Areas.

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